

STUDENTS' READINESS TO ENTER TOURISM INDUSTRY

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Abstract

Sahid Institute of Tourism is one of the higher educations that facilitate scholarship program for students from Eastern part of Indonesia. It has more than 150 students from NTT, Papua, Gorontalo, and Ternate. At the end of their bachelor study, the students are expected to operate well in tourism industry. This research is a pilot study to investigate students' perception on their readiness to enter tourism industry and to find out whether there is significant difference in the perception. A sample of 15 students are taken out of 76 Nusa Tenggara Timur students who are about to graduate. The sample is taken using random sampling method. A questionnaire is carried out to obtain primary data. The questionnaire consists of two parts; profile of the respondent and perception on their readiness to enter tourism industry. Six components of employability skills included. Overall students perceive that they are ready to enter tourism industry. The respondents perceive that they are ready in problem solving, independent learning, use of technology, and teamwork. They feel almost ready in use of foreign language and planning-organizing. It is found out there is no significant difference in their perception in terms of study program and gender. It is suggested that further investigation is needed.

Keywords: perception, readiness, tourism, industry, students

Introduction

Indonesia tourism industry has an important role in Indonesia economy. It has placed itself on the 4th rank in industry contribution to national GDP after oil and gas. During the last 10 years there is positive growth in terms of international tourism. The sector has contributed US\$ 10 billion to national economy in the end of 2013. Tourist arrival is also predicted to grow in the future as economy continues to rise. The government of Indonesia is targeting 20 million of visitors by 2020 (Johnson: 2015). Although tourism industry is growing, tourism development distribution is imbalance among provinces. Indonesia tourism mainly concentrates in Java and Bali, in which the infrastructure and the economy activities are there. (Giyanto: 2014).

To provide balanced tourism distribution in Indonesia, Indonesian government has shifted its focus on tourism development from west to east Indonesia area. The east Indonesia area has tremendous natural tourism potentials. Development in the area is to promote 3A's in tourism; Accessibility, Attraction, and Accommodation (S. Noviyanti: 2014). It is expected that tourism in east Indonesia would develop as well.

The success of tourism industry also lies in its human quality. Esu (2012) mentioned that the survival of every tourist's destination is predicated on the provision effective human capital management for tourism organization and enterprise. The quality of service delivery in a destination is a reflection of the quality of human capital. However, similar to tourism development, there is also imbalance between human resources quality in western and eastern Indonesia. Eastern Indonesia has lower human development index compared to the western part. National Statistic Board recorded three provinces in eastern Indonesia have the lowest human development index; Papua, NTT, and NTB (Pos Kupang; 2014). Developing human resources in eastern part of Indonesia is needed. One problem with education, particularly in eastern area is because the Indonesian archipelago is very wide and the islands are scattered.

In order to develop human resources in east Indonesia, the government through its Ministry of National Education awards scholarship for local provinces in Indonesia to continue their study to higher education. The program is called Program Beasiswa Unggulan which is intended to improve local human resources (Kompas.com: 2013). Sahid Institute of Tourism Jakarta is a private university that has cooperation with the Bureau for International Partnership - Ministry of National Education and Culture that facilitates the scholarship program. It has reached to five recipient areas from eastern Indonesia such as East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), Ambon, Gorontalo, Ternate and Papua. Currently, Sahid Institute of Tourism East Jakarta have Indonesian students with more than 150 who come from the East Nusa Tenggara, Maluku, Gorontalo, West Papua and other regions.

Table 1
East Indonesia Students at Sahid Institute of Tourism

Year	NTT		Gorontalo		Ternate		Papua	
	Hotel	Travel	Hotel	Travel	Hotel	Travel	Hotel	Travel
PBU 7 (2011)	46	30	0	0	0	0	0	0
PBU 8 (2012)	27	0	1	0	6	6	0	1
PBU 9 (2013)	7	2	0	0	0	0	13	10
Total	80	32	1	0	6	6	13	11

Source: Sahid Institute of Tourism (2014)

Having completed the four years bachelor degree program in tourism industry, these students are expected to return to their home county to operate in tourism industry and develop their home town. It is necessary to conduct an evaluation of the program implemented which is too gain perspective on learning process which has been undergone by the students. This study would investigate the students' perception on their readiness to enter the tourism industry. The indicators used to measure the students' perception cover the employability skills in the hospitality framework. They include: communication, teamwork, problem saving, initiative and enterprise, planning and organizing, self-management, learning, and technology

This study would answer the following questions:

1. What is students' perception on their readiness to enter the tourism industry?
2. Is there any difference in their perception according to demographic profile (gender and study program)?

The purpose of conducting this research is to obtain feedback from the students in relation with learning process which can serve as input for administrators to upgrade learning process in order to be effective.

Literature Review

Curriculum and Employability Skills

Curriculum is generally defined as the subjects comprising a course of study in a school or college. Since 2010, the government of Indonesia declares that curriculum that is adopted by higher education institution refer to Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). In 2012, the government of Indonesia issues Kerangka Kualifikasi Nasional Indonesia (KKNI) which is a national qualification framework; a guidance to be adopted in developing learning outcomes for higher education institution. There is also input from the industry that provides professional competency standard that can be adopted by education institution. The standards cover tour and travel, hotel and restaurant, spa, food product, tour leader, tour guide, museum guide, ecotourism guide, rafting guide, and MICE. The competency standards include core, generic, and functional skills (Kempenpar: 2011).

Sahid Institute of Tourism is one of the pioneers of higher education tourism institution. It was established in 1983. The institute is under the management of Sahid Jaya Foundation, which has other several business units in tourism such as tour and travel and hotel groups. The institute has produced graduates that operate in hotel and tourism industry in Indonesia and International. It has two study programs hotel and travel department. The level of the study includes diploma to bachelor degrees program. The curriculum for the bachelor program includes of communication, financial, IT, management, hospitality & tourism specific, research and general skills (STP Sahid: 2015).

Ogbeide (2006) conducts a study on the relationship between curriculum and employability skills. He discussed that curriculum is important aspect that can prepare the competence of the students for their future career. He agrees that employability skills are as much as important as technical skills. He adds that these skills shall be the focus in the hospitality curriculum. The employability skills that should be encouraged include communication skills, leadership skills, critical thinking skills, problem solving, creative and flexible thinking, and human resources management. He concludes that curriculum improvement is needed to

include materials that would improve the students' knowledge and understanding of the political implications of their decision and human relation skills.

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) and The Australian Chamber of Commerce and the Industry (ACCI) issued a report on Employability Skills for the Future (Board of Studies NSW; 2013). The report indicated that business and industry recommend the following eight employability skills: (1) communication, (2) Teamwork, (3) Problem solving, (4) Initiative and Enterprise, (5) Planning and Organizing, (6) Self-Management (7) Learning (8) Technology. The aspects of the skills are identified.

Perception on Readiness

Conradie (2012) identifies generic and curriculum specific skills that can be used for evaluation, framework variables to rate the level students' preparedness, and aspects that contribute to students preparedness. The skills include communication skills, conceptual skills, analytical skills, teamwork, leadership, interpersonal, marketing, human resource, finance, IT, hospitality operation, food and restaurant, event, lodging, club, casino, tourism and travel. The study found out that hospitality specific subjects and experiential learning contribute to students' preparedness. It is argued that understanding students own personal judgment is effective to evaluate the curriculum effectiveness. Rahman (2010) conducts a similar study on the effectiveness of hospitality curriculum and their preparedness.

While Conradie investigates from the point of view the students, other studies investigate from the point of view of employer. A study conducted by Lowden (2011) defines employability skills to be the skills almost everyone needs to do almost any job. Employability skills are considered as core skills or key competencies. They are the skills that must be present to enable individual to use the more specific knowledge and technical skills that their particular workplace will require. They include: Using numbers effectively, using language effectively, using IT effectively, self-management, solving problem, and working in teamwork.

Association of American Colleges and Universities (2015) applies the following variables to investigate college graduates preparedness for work from the point of view of the employers. They are: (1) working with others, (2) staying current in technology, (3) ethical judgment and decision making (4) locating and organizing information (5) oral communication (6) working with numbers (7) being creative or innovative (8) solving problem (9) risk taking. This study found out that there is disagreement between college graduates perception and employer. Employers score lower on college graduates preparedness across learning outcomes, while students think they are more prepared. It is stated that college graduates are lacking in some basic skills such as problem solving, decision making, and the ability to prioritize task. In hospitality industry point of view, several studies criticized college graduates preparedness when they enter the industry (Harper, Brown and Irvine, 2005; William, 2005). Similar finding is also pointed by Felisitas (2012).

From the previous studies, it can be inferred that it is important that curriculum to develop the employability skills that are useful for the students future career. Several studies have been conducted either from the perspectives from the students and the employers or industry to find out the readiness of the students for their future career. Input from the students and employers are taken into account as means of improving curriculum.

Students' readiness to enter the workforce following program completion may be influenced by a variety of factors, including the resources and services available for them and those perception on those services. It may also be influenced by their program study (Archer: 2004)

Methodology

This study is a pilot study conducted to find out the perception of students readiness. This research employs descriptive quantitative approach. The use of descriptive research is to better define an opinion, attitude, or behavior held by a group of people on a given subject (Mirzae: 2014). According to Aggarwal (2008) descriptive research is devoted to the gathering of information about prevailing condition or situation for the purpose of description and interpretation. It is not simply tabulating facts but includes proper analyses, interpretation, comparison, identification of trends and relationship.

The instrument employs to obtain primary data is using a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of two parts:

Profile of Respondents

The first part asks about profile of respondents. This part asks questions related to demographic profile of respondents including age, program study, gender, plan after graduation. Level of satisfaction with the program study and components that contribute to their readiness are also asked. Each question uses nominal measurement.

Respondents' Perception

The second parts ask questions to answer their perception on the readiness to enter the industry. The students are asked to rate how ready they are in terms of the six items of employability skills. A likert scale is employed to answer these questions. The scale ranges from (1) very unready (2) unready (3) unsure (4) ready (5) very ready.

The respondents involved in this research are the students from year 2011. The reason is that they will about to graduate in 2015. The total respondents used in this research 15 students. The respondents are selected randomly from the total population of 76, these respondents come from East of Nusa Tenggara (NTT). In descriptive research, 10-20% of population is sufficient.

The data is collected then analyzed descriptively. The result of the data is then analyzed using SPSS. Frequency and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) are employed. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) is used to examine more than two means at a time. ANOVA analysis is used to identify whether there are any differences in perception over respondent socio-demographic which include gender, study program, and age.

Results And Discussion

Respondents' Profile

Out of 15 respondents, 80% are female and 20% are males. All of them come from East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). 40% are from Hotel Department and 60% are from Tour and Travel Department. Almost all of them aged 20-25 years old. When the respondents are asked about their plan after they finish their study (graduation), majority of them choose working (93%) and only 7% choose continue study. There is a slight difference in the preferences of the workplace preference, 47% choose in their province, 40% in Indonesia, and 13% choose to work overseas. None of them choose to work in their home village although it is asked in the questionnaire. The Details could be found in Table 1.

Table 1
Respondents Profile (N=15)

No.	Description	Frequency	Number %
1	Sex		
	Female	12	80
	Male	3	20
2	Origin		
	NTT	15	100
3	Department		
	Hotel	6	40
	Tour and Travel	9	60
4	Age		
	20-25	14	93
	26-30	1	7
5	Plan after graduation		
	Working	14	93
	Continue Study	1	7
	Start business	0	0
6	Area of Work Preference		
	In home province	7	47
	In Indonesia	6	40
	Overseas	2	13

From the questionnaire it is also found out that overall students are satisfied with the learning process that they have gone through during their study in Sahid Institute of Tourism. It can be seen from the table below. Majority of the

respondents think that they are satisfied with their study which is represented by almost 80% of the respondents.

Table 2
Level of Satisfaction with the Program Study

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Unsatisfied	2	13.3	14.3	14.3
	Unsure	1	6.7	7.1	21.4
	Satisfied	10	66.7	71.4	92.9
	Very Satisfied	1	6.7	7.1	100
	Total	14	100	100	

Perceptions on readiness to enter tourism industry

Most of the respondents perceive that they are ready to enter tourism industry which is represented by total average mean score of 4.15 from 1=very unready to 5=very ready. Out of the total answers, the respondents feel that they are most ready in most of the employability skills components including working in teamwork (Mean=4.33, SD=0.62), problem solving (Mean=4.27, SD=0.60), and use of technology (Mean=4.00, SD=0.58). They feel that they are most ready in learning independently. However, the result shows that they perceive almost ready in terms of communication in foreign language (mean=3.27, SD=0.96) and in planning and organization (Mean=3.87, SD= 0.64).

Table 3
Students Perception on their Readiness to Enter Tourism Industry

No.	Description	N	Mean	Std Deviation
1	Communication in foreign languages	15	3.27	.96
2	Working in teamwork	15	4.33	.62
3	Problem Solving	15	4.27	.60
4	Planning and Organization	15	3.87	.64
5	Independent Learning	15	4.47	.64
6	Use of Technology	15	4.00	.58
	Total Average mean score		4.15	

Difference in means (ANOVA Test)

From the finding it is found out that there is no significant difference between students' perception on their readiness to enter tourism industry with their study program, age and gender. From the data is found out that the level of significant of all descriptors in study program, gender, or age is above 0.05. This means that the hypothesis of there is significant difference between the means is rejected. The details can be seen in Table 3.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

No	Description	Study program			Gender			Age		
		df	F	Sig.	df	F	Sig.	df	F	Sig.
1	Communication in foreign language	14	.045	.836	14	.274	.610	14	.077	.786
2	Working as teamwork	14	3.421	.087	14	.000	1.000	14	.297	.595
3	Problem Solving	14	1.613	.226	14	.044	.837	14	.204	.659
4	Planning & Organization	14	.025	.876	14	.153	.702	14	0.043	.838
5	Independent Learning	14	.025	.876	14	.153	.702	14	.552	.471
6	Use of Technology	14	.923	.357	14	.336	.272	12	.000	1.000

Another questions asked in this research is which of the educational component that contribute to their readiness to enter the industry. The finding shows that majority of the students consider that On the Job Training or Internship is the factor that contributes most to their readiness to enter the industry. The second factor that is considered is the lecturer. Part time job and facilities are considered the least contribute to their readiness.

Table 5.
Component that promotes students' readiness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Lecturer	2	13.3	13.3	13.3
	Facilities	1	6.7	6.7	20.0
	OJT	11	73.3	73.3	93.3
	Part Time	1	6.7	6.7	100
	Extracurricular	0	0	0	
	Total	15	100	100	

Developing human resource of the students by higher education scholarship program is a positive step in order to develop the tourism industry in the eastern Indonesia. This study finds out that there is positive perception among the students regarding the study program that they have had in the institution. Generally, it can be assumed that students feel that they are ready with to enter the tourism and hospitality industry. This positive perception is expected to lead them for better career in industry which they later enter. Overall, they are satisfied with the learning process they have experienced. It is expected that the learning process would make them more confident to work in the industry.

It is also discovered that there are areas that need to be improved. The areas include in communication in foreign languages and planning and organizing. It needs to be further investigated specifically in which areas they are lacking. The

students' highly perceive job training program as the educational component that make them feel ready to enter the industry. On the job training is regarded as one important aspect for them. Hergert (2009) claims that on the job training or internship plays a crucial role in helping students to make connections between their traditional coursework and workplace. Students place a great value on the internship experience.

What is interesting to know is that after the completion of their study, the respondents have interest to expand the tourism industry not only in their home province but also in larger scale; national and international arena. It is probable that by entering the industry beyond home provinces offer more opportunities and benefits. The low regional minimum wage offered by the province maybe is the reason why half of the students are not into work in the home province.

Conclusions

The author realizes that this paper is still far from perfection, that there are some limitations in the depth and breadth scope of the research. There needs to be improvement many areas, especially in terms of the sampling method and research instrument in order to provide a better understanding. However in general sense, there are aspects that needs to take into consideration for further research. Stakeholders' perception on students' readiness from several studies have initially been identified. Further research needs to elaborate more specific and comprehensive skills that are really needed in preparing the students for their future career in tourism and hospitality industry. Further study needs to be conducted to find from the employers point of view. In addition, more samples of students with different background need to be included for comparison.

In general sense, this paper implies that the institution need to dig more on the perceptions of the students in which specific skill and why they feel unsure or have less confident. Better understanding of the students is as means of continuously improving learning process.

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